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TITLE: INK JET PRINTER

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INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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ALPS ELECTRIC CO LTD

APPL-NO: JP02175104 APPL-DATE: July 2, 1990

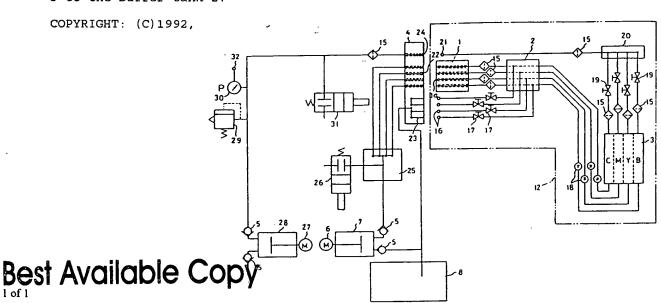
US-CL-CURRENT: 347/92

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ABSTRACT:

PURPOSE: To shrink a bubble in an ink flow path to ensure the removal of the bubble to conduct a proper printing by a method wherein bubbles and the like stagnating inside a head and a buffer tank are pressurized by a pressurizing pump as well as sucked by a suction pump.

CONSTITUTION: When bubbles or the like stagnate inside a head 1, a buffer tank 2, or the like, a motor 27 is driven with the head 1 capped with a cap 4 to actuate a pressurizing pump 28, and a motor 6 is driven to actuate a suction pump 7. In this manner, a pressurizing air is fed from a pressure supply port 24 of the cap 4 to an ink tank 3 through a pressure connection port 21, whereby ink in the buffer tank 2 and an ink flow path of the head 1 is pressurized. On the other hand, by sucking a nozzle 1a of the head 1 from an ink suction port 22 by the suction pump 7, the pressurized ink and bubble in the head 1 are sucked out of the nozzle 1a to be discharged to a waste liquid tank 8. In addition, an ink residual amount sensor 18 stops the drive of the pressurizing pump 28 when detecting the exhaustion of ink in the path from the ink tank 3 to the buffer tank 2.



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Japanese Patent

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INK JET PRINTER

[Inku Jetto Purinta]

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Washington, D.C.

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Specification

1. Title of the invention

Ink jet printer

2. Patent Claim

An ink jet printer with the following characteristics: In an ink jet printer which possesses a head that jets an ink onto a paper based on a certain drive signal and a cap which caps said head during the non-printing mode of said head and wherein an ink tank into which an ink of a certain color is scheduled to be filled is connected to the aforementioned head via a buffer tank,

A discharge valve which is connected to the aforementioned buffer tank and which discharges air and an overflow ink into an effluent tank,

A compressive pump which feeds compressed air into the aforementioned ink tank,

A suction pump which is connected to the aforementioned cap and which suctions the ink flowing out of the aforementioned head during the compressive action of the aforementioned compressive pump, and

¹ Numbers in the margin indicate pagination in the foreign text.

An ink remaining balance sensor which is configured between the aforementioned compressive pump and the aforementioned buffer tank

Are additionally configured.

3. Detailed explanation of the invention

(Industrial application fields)

The present invention concerns an ink jet printer which serves a printing function by jetting an ink toward a paper from a head, and in particular, it concerns an ink jet printer which ensures the removal of bubbles which have strayed into an ink flow path.

(Prior art)

Generally speaking, ink jet printers which render certain printing actions, via the nozzles thereof, onto papers by jetting inks fed into the heads thereof are being used frequently for reasons of their minimal noise generation tendencies, etc.

Figure 5 shows an outline of such an ink jet printer of the prior art, where the ink tank (3), into which an ink is scheduled to be filled, is connected, via the buffer tank (2), to the head (1), which is mounted on a carriage not shown in the figure and which possesses a nozzle (not shown in the figure) at the distal end thereof. These components are mounted respectively on a carriage. /2

The cap (4), which caps the aforementioned head (1) during the non-printing mode, furthermore, is configured at a position corresponding to the standard position of the aforementioned head (1), whereas an ink suction gate (not shown in the figure) which is connected to the nozzle of the aforementioned head (1) is formed on said cap (4). The suction pump (7), the action of which is invoked by the motor (6), is connected to the aforementioned cap (4) via one anti-back-flow valve (5), whereas the effluent tank (8) is connected to said suction pump (7) via another anti-back-flow valve (5).

As far as the aforementioned ink jet printer of the prior art is concerned, an ink jetting mechanism (not shown in the figure) of the aforementioned head (1) is activated based on a certain print signal, and an ink of a certain color which has been fed from the aforementioned ink tank (3) via the buffer tank (2) is jetted toward a paper, as a result of which the desired printing action becomes invoked.

Upon the completion of the printing action, the aforementioned carriage is returned to the specified standard position, whereas the aforementioned head (1) becomes capped with the aforementioned cap (4) at said standard position, as a result of which the dryness, etc. of the ink of the ink nozzle of the aforementioned head (1) can be prevented.

In a case where bubbles become trapped in the interior of the aforementioned head (1) and/or the interior of the buffer tank (2), furthermore, the action of the suction pump (7) is invoked by

driving the motor (6) in a state where the aforementioned cap (4) is ON, as a result of which bubbles, etc. become suctioned from the nozzle of the aforementioned head (1), and both the ink and bubbles within the head (1), etc. are removed and then discharged into the effluent tank (8).

Figure 6 shows an outline of another ink jet printer of the prior art, where the suction pump (7) is connected to the buffer tank (2) via the anti-back-flow valve (5).

As far as this ink jet printer of the prior art shown in Figure 6 is concerned, in a case where bubbles, etc. have become trapped in the interior of the aforementioned head (1), etc., the suction pump (7) is activated, as a result of which the bubbles, etc. become suctioned via the nozzle of the aforementioned head (1), and at the same time, the bubbles, etc. are removed from the buffer tank (2) side as well, as a result of which both the ink and bubbles within the head (1), etc. are removed and then discharged into the effluent tank (8).

(Problems to be solved by the invention)

As far as the respective ink jet printers of the prior art discussed above are concerned, however, the bubbles, etc. in the interior of the head (1) are scheduled to become removed based on the suction of the aforementioned head (1) by activating the suction pump (7), and therefore, the ink flow path becomes clogged as a result of the expansion of the aforementioned bubbles by the negative pressure that becomes generated during the aforementioned

suction, as a result of which it becomes impossible to suction the ink and bubbles smoothly, which is problematic in that the bubbles cannot be completely removed. For this reason, it is impossible to invoke an appropriate ink jetting action from the head (1), which is problematic in that printing defects are in turn incurred.

The objective of the present invention, which has been conceived in response to the aforementioned problems, is to provide an ink jet printer which is capable of assuredly removing bubbles from an ink flow path and of rendering an appropriate printing action.

(Mechanism for solving the problems)

In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, the ink jet printer of the present invention is characterized as follows: In an ink jet printer which possesses a head that jets an ink onto a paper based on a certain drive signal and a cap which caps said head during the non-printing mode of said head and wherein an ink tank into which an ink of a certain color is scheduled to be filled is connected to the aforementioned head via a buffer tank, a discharge valve which is connected to the aforementioned buffer tank and which discharges air and an overflow ink into an effluent tank, (a compressive pump) which feeds compressed air into the aforementioned ink tank, (a suction pump) which is connected to the aforementioned cap and which suctions the ink flowing out of the aforementioned head during the compressive action of the

aforementioned compressive pump, and an ink remaining balance sensor which is configured between the aforementioned compressive pump and the aforementioned buffer tank are additionally configured.

(Functions)

Based on the aforementioned constitution of the present invention, in a case where bubbles, etc. have become trapped in the interior of the head and/or interior of the buffer tank, etc., compressed air is pumped into the ink tank by activating the compressive pump, as a result of which the inks within the buffer tank and the ink flow path of the head become compressed, and since the bubbles within the ink flow path become contracted as a result of this compression, the congestion of the ink flow path by the bubbles can be prevented, and the ink can be induced to flow smoothly. Since the head is suctioned by activating the suction pump, on the other hand, the ink and /3
bubbles compressed within the head become suctioned via the nozzle and discharged into the effluent tank, and since the bubbles can assuredly be removed, the ink can be optimally jetted, and the printing quality can be improved.

Upon the detection of the exhaustion of the ink within the ink tank and buffer tank by the ink remaining balance sensor, furthermore, the drive of the compressive pump is terminated, and the compressive action is stopped, based on which the pumping of an excess of air into the buffer tank can be prevented.

(Application examples)

In the following, the present invention will be explained with reference to an application example shown in figures.

Figure 1 instantiates an application example of the ink jet printer of the present invention, where the cylindrical platen (10) is configured, in a freely rotatable/drivable fashion, within the printer mainframe (9), whereas a pair of guide shafts (11) and (11) are configured in front of the aforementioned platen (10) along the axial direction of said platen (10). The carriage (12) is configured on the respective guide shafts (11) in such a way that it can be displaced back and forth along said guide shafts (11), whereas the head (1) for jetting inks of the respective colors (e.g., cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) is mounted on said carriage (12). Multiple ink cartridges (3A), in which the ink tanks (3) for feeding the aforementioned inks of the respective colors are being housed, are mounted on the aforementioned carriage (12), whereas the pump unit (13) for removing bubbles, etc. within the ink flow paths from the aforementioned carriage (12) to the head (1) is configured on the aforementioned printer mainframe (9). The continuous paper (14), which has been coiled in the shape of a roll, is configured behind the platen (10) of the aforementioned printer mainframe (9), whereas said paper (14) is designed to be guided to a certain printing position along the outer circumference of the aforementioned platen (10).

Figure 2, furthermore, shows an application example of ink feeding and bubble discharge mechanisms that can be applied to the aforementioned ink jet printer, where the buffer tank (2) is connected to the aforementioned head (1) via the filters (15), (15), ..., whereas ink tanks (3), into which the inks of the respective colors [e.g., cyan (C), magenta (M), yellow (Y), and black (B)] are designed to be filled, are connected to said buffer The discharge valves (17), (17), ..., which are tank (2). positioned in the vicinity of the respective buffer tank discharge gates (16), (16), ..., are connected to the aforementioned buffer tank (2), whereas the ink remaining balance sensors (18), (18), may, for example, be instantiated by interruptors, etc. that detect the presence or absence of an ink, are orchestrated to intervene between the aforementioned buffer tank (2) and ink tanks (3). The relay unit (20), furthermore, is connected to the aforementioned ink tank (3) via the filter (15) and the valve (19) whereas the compressive connection gate (21) is connected to said relay unit (20) via the filter (15). respective components mentioned above are designed to be mounted on the aforementioned carriage (12).

The side of the aforementioned printer mainframe (9), on the other hand, is blanketed with the aforementioned head (1), and at the same time, the cap (4), which is connected to the aforementioned buffer tank discharge gate (16) and compressive connection gate (21), is concomitantly configured, whereas the ink suction gate (22), which is connected to the nozzle (1a) of the

aforementioned head (1), the ink discharge gate (23), which is connected to the aforementioned buffer tank discharge gate (16), and the compressive feeding gate (24), which is connected to the aforementioned compressive connection gate (21), are configured on said cap (4) within a virtually singular plane along a direction perpendicular to the aforementioned cap (4).

The relay unit (25), which merges the inks obtained from the respective ink suction gates (22) of the aforementioned cap (4), is connected to each ink suction gate (22), whereas the suction pressure release valve (26), which can be designated at a position connected to the outside, is connected to this relay unit (25). The suction pump (7), which is activated by the motor (6) via one anti-back-flow valve (5), furthermore, is connected to the aforementioned relay unit (25), whereas the effluent tank (8) is connected to this suction pump (7) via another anti-back-flow valve (5).

A drive element (not shown in the figure) such as a solenoid, etc. for driving a pin (not shown in the figure) for invoking ON/OFF actions of the respective discharge valves (17)

/4

mentioned above in a state where the aforementioned ink discharge gate (23) is being connected to the buffer tank discharge gate (16), furthermore, is configured, in a protrudable fashion, in the vicinity of the ink discharge gate (23) of the aforementioned cap (4). The aforementioned effluent tank (8), furthermore, is connected to each ink discharge gate (23).

The compressive pump (28), which is activated by the motor (27), is connected to the compressive feeding gate (24) of the aforementioned cap (4) via the filter (15) and either anti-backflow valve (5), whereas outer air is designed to become suctioned into said compressive pump (28) via the other anti-back-flow valve (5). Configured between the aforementioned compressive pump (28) and the compressive feeding gate (24) of the cap (4), furthermore, are the relief valve (29), which serves a function of feeding air into the relay unit (25) at a constant pressure by releasing a pressure that represents an excess beyond a certain threshold of the compressed air fed via the aforementioned compressive pump (28), the pressure sensor (30), which detects the pressure of the compressed air pumped by the aforementioned compressive pump (28), and the compression cancellation valve (31), which can be designated at a position connected to the outer atmosphere, whereas the outer atmosphere temperature sensor (32), which is used for calibrating the pressure variation in response to an outer atmosphere temperature [variation], is additionally attached to the aforementioned pressure sensor (30).

A constitution wherein the pressure variation in response to an outer atmosphere temperature [variation] is calibrated by the aforementioned outer atmosphere temperature sensor (32) is shown in Figure 3. In Figure 3, the temperature signal processing circuit (33), into which the temperature detection signal of the aforementioned outer atmosphere temperature sensor (32) is designed to be inputted, and the pressure signal processing

circuit (34), into which the pressure detection signal of the aforementioned pressure sensor (30) is designed to be inputted, are configured, whereas the temperature detection signal obtained from the aforementioned temperature signal processing circuit (33) is designed to be inputted into this pressure signal processing circuit (34). The aforementioned pressure detection signal, furthermore, is calibrated by this pressure signal processing circuit (34) based on the temperature detection signal obtained from the aforementioned temperature signal processing circuit (33).

The compressive pump control circuit (35), into which the calibration signal obtained from the aforementioned pressure signal processing circuit (34) is designed to be inputted, is additionally configured, and the drive of the motor (27) of the aforementioned compressive pump (28) is designed to be controlled by this compressive pump control circuit (35). In other words, as Figure 4 shows, the pressure of the aforementioned compressed air becomes elevated as the outer atmosphere temperature increases, and therefore, in a case where the outer atmosphere temperature is characterized by T0 > T1 > T2, for example, the drive voltage of the motor (27) of the compressive pump (28) is scheduled to be lowered in response to an outer atmosphere temperature gain under the control of the aforementioned compressive pump control circuit (35), based on which the compression pressure can be optimally controlled in accordance with the outer atmosphere temperature.

Next, the functions of the present application example characterized by the aforementioned constitution will be explained.

First, as Figure 1 indicates, in a case where an ordinary printing action is invoked, the paper (14) is transported to a certain printing position by rotating and driving the platen (10), and an ink jetting mechanism (not shown in the figure) such as a piezoelectric element, etc. of the aforementioned head (1) activated based on a certain printing signal while aforementioned carriage (12) is being transported along the quide shafts (11), as a result of which an ink of a desired color which has become fed from the aforementioned ink tank (3) via the buffer tank (2) becomes jetted toward the aforementioned paper (14), and the desired printing action is thus invoked.

Upon the completion of the printing action, furthermore, the aforementioned carriage (12) is returned to the specified standard position, whereas the aforementioned cap (4) becomes capped onto the aforementioned head (1) at this standard position, based on which the dryness, etc. of the ink inside the nozzle (1a) of the aforementioned head (1) can be prevented. Since the head (1) is capped with the aforementioned cap (4) in this state, the aforementioned drive elements configured in the vicinity of the respective ink discharge gates (23) become activated, as a result of which the pins stemming from the respective ink discharge gates (23) come to protrude toward the respective buffer tank discharge gates (16), as a result of which the respective discharge valves

(17) become opened. It is thus that an excess of air and/or overflowing inks within the buffer tanks (2) become discharged into the effluent tank (8) via the ink discharge gate (23).

In a case where bubbles, etc. have become trapped in the interior of the head (1) and/or interior of the buffer tank (2), furthermore, the action of the compressive pump (28) is invoked by driving the motor (27) under the pervasion of the state where the aforementioned head (1) is being capped by the aforementioned cap (4), and at the same time, the action of the suction pump (7) is invoked by driving the motor (6).

It is thus that compressed air becomes pumped into the ink tank (3) from the compressive feeding gate (24) of the aforementioned cap (4) via the compressive connection gate (21), as a result of which the inks within the ink flow paths of the buffer tank (2) and head (1) become compressed. As a result of this compression, furthermore, the bubbles within the ink flow path become

contracted, and since the congestion of the ink flow path by the bubbles can be prevented, the ink can be induced to flow smoothly.

The nozzle (1a) of the head (1), on the other hand, becomes suctioned by the aforementioned suction pump (7) via the ink suction gate (22), as a result of which the compressed ink and bubbles within the head (1) become suctioned via the nozzle (1a) and then discharged into the effluent tank (8).

In a case where the action of the aforementioned compressive pump (28) is invoked, the pressure ascribed to the compressive

pump (28) is detected by the pressure sensor (30), and at the same time, the outer atmosphere temperature is detected by the outer atmosphere temperature sensor (32), whereas the drive of the motor (27) of the aforementioned compressive pump (28) is controlled based on the pressure detection value calibrated by said outer atmosphere temperature, by virtue of which the compression magnitude can be maintained at a constant level in response even to the volume variation of the ink tank (3) or to an outer atmosphere temperature variation. In a case where the pressure of the compressed air has exceeded a certain threshold, furthermore, the excess of air is designed to be released via the relief valve (29), based on which the compression magnitude can perpetually be maintained at a constant level.

Upon the exhaustion of the ink filled into the ink tank (3) as a result of the compression of the aforementioned compressive pump (28), furthermore, the aforementioned ink remaining balance sensor (18) detects the depletion of the ink in-between the ink tank (3) and buffer tank (2), based on which the drive of the aforementioned compressive pump (28) is terminated, and the compressive action is stopped, followed by the supplementation of the ink into the ink tank (3). It is thus that the pumping of an excess of air into the buffer tank (2) can be avoided.

Thus, as far as the present application example is concerned, the compression of the compressive pump (28) is complemented by the suction of the suction pump (7) in the context of removing bubbles within the ink flow path, and therefore, the bubbles can

assuredly be removed without entailing the hindrance of the ink flow, which is in turn attributed to the congestion of the ink flow path as a result of the expansion of the bubbles. As a result, it becomes possible to jet the ink from the head (1) optimally, and the printing quality can be improved.

The compression magnitude can, furthermore, be controlled at a constant level by the pressure sensor (30) during the compression by the compressive pump (28), and therefore, even in a case where a pressure which exceeds a certain threshold has become impressed, the excess of the pressure can be released via the relief valve (29), based on which the compression magnitude can perpetually be controlled at a constant level. The pumping of the excess of air into the buffer tank (2), furthermore, is assuredly prevented by the aforementioned ink remaining balance sensor (18).

Since the ON/OFF actions of the discharge valves (17) of the buffer tank (2) are invoked by drive elements configured on the cap (4) side, furthermore, there is no need to use an expensive electromagnetic valve as the aforementioned discharge valves (17), and accordingly, the same can be inexpensively manufactured. Since the ink suction gate (22), ink discharge gate (23), and compressive feeding gate (24) are formed within a singular plane of the aforementioned cap (4), furthermore, the structure of said cap (4) can be considerably simplified, and its production can be facilitated; moreover, the space efficiency can be improved.

Incidentally, the present invention is not limited to the aforementioned application example, and various modifications may adventitiously be made, if necessary.

(Effects of the invention)

As the foregoing explanations have demonstrated, as far as the ink jet printer of the present invention is concerned, the compression of a compressive pump is complemented by the suction of a suction pump in the context of removing bubbles within ink flow paths, and therefore, the bubbles can assuredly be removed without entailing the hindrance of the ink flow, which is in turn attributed to the congestion of the ink flow path as a result of the expansion of the bubbles. As a result, it becomes possible to jet the ink from the head optimally, and the printing quality can be improved. Upon the detection of the depletion of the ink inbetween the ink tank and buffer tank by an ink remaining balance sensor, furthermore, the drive of the compressive pump is terminated, and the compressive action is stopped, based on which the pumping of an excess of air into the buffer tank can be avoided.

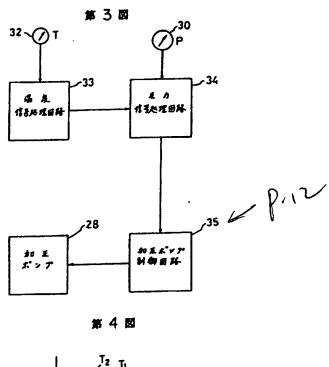
4. Brief explanation of the figures

Figure 1 is a diagram which shows an oblique view of an application example of the ink jet printer of the present invention, whereas Figure 2 is a block diagram which shows ink feeding and bubbles removal mechanisms that can be applied to the

printer shown in Figure 1, whereas Figure 3 is a block diagram which shows a pressure-temperature calibration control circuit for the /6

compressive pump shown in Figure 2, whereas Figure 4 is a graph which shows the relationship between the pressure variation that dovetails an outer atmosphere temperature variation and the compressive pump drive voltage, whereas Figure 5 is a block diagram which shows an ink jet printer of the prior art, whereas Figure 6 is a block diagram which shows another ink jet printer of the prior art.

(1): Head; (2): Buffer tank; (3): Ink tank; (3A): Ink cartridges; (4): Cap; (7): Suction pump; (8): Effluent tank; (12): Carriage; (16): Buffer tank discharge gate; (17): Discharge valves; (18): Ink remaining balance sensor; (21): Compressive connection gate; (22): Ink suction gate; (23): Ink discharge gate; (24): Compressive feeding gate; (28): Compressive pump; (29): Relief valve; (30): Pressure sensor; (32): Outer atmosphere temperature sensor.



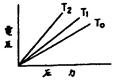
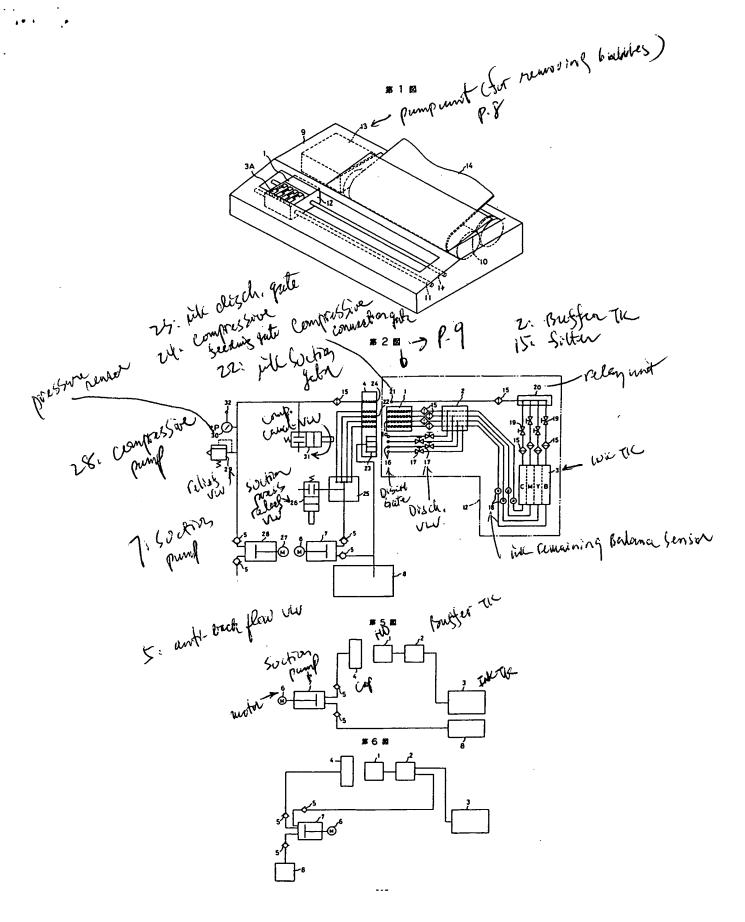


Figure 3

[(28): Compressive pump; (33): Temperature signal processing circuit; (34): Pressure signal processing circuit; (35): Compressive pump control circuit]

Figure 4

[(1): Voltage; (2): Pressure]



19日本国特許庁(JP)

① 特許出願公開

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PTO 2003-3639

S.T.I.C. Translations Branch

明報書

1. 発明の名称

インクジェットプリンタ

2. 特許請求の範囲

 9 .

3. 発明の詳細な説明

(産業上の利用分野)

本発明は、ヘッドからインクを用紙に向けて順 射して印字を行なうインクジェットプリンタに係 り、特に、インク遊路内に混入された気泡を確実 に除去することを可能としたインクジェットプリ ンタに関する。

(従来の技術)

一般に、ヘッドに送給されるインクをそのノズ ルから噴出させることにより、用紙上に所望の印字を行なうインクジェットプリンタが、その静粛 性などの要由により多く用いられている。

第5回はこのようなインクジェットプリンタの 従来のものの最略を示すものであり、図示しない キャリッジに搭載され先輪部にノズル(図示せず) が形成されたヘッド1には、パッファタンク2を 介してインクを充塡するインクタンク3が接続さ れている。これらの各部材は、キャリッジに搭載 されている.

また、前記ペッド1の基準位置に対応するセッド1の基準位置に対応するキャップ4には、非印字時に前記ペッド1を被覆するキャップ4には、プイが設けられており、このキャップ4に吸引して投資されている。前記キャップ4には、逆止弁5を介してモータ6により動作される吸引ポンプ7には、他の逆止弁5を介して魔波タンク8が接続されている。

前述した従来のインクジェットプリンタによれば、所定の印字信号に基づいて前記ヘッド1の図示しないインク吸出機構を動作させて、前記インクタンク3からパッファタンク2を介して供射させるれる所望の色のインクを用紙に向けて機射させることにより、所望の印字を行なうことができる。

そして、印字が終了したら、前記キャリッジは 所定の基準位置に戻され、この基準位置において 前記ヘッド1に前記キャップ4が被着され、これ により、前記ヘッド1のインクノズルのインクの

本発明は、前述した点に鑑みてなされたもので、 インクの策略内の気泡を確実に除去することができ、選正な印字を行なうことのできるインクジェットプリンタを提供することを目的とする。

(親類を解決するための手段)

前述した目的を達成するため本発明のインクジェットプリンタは、所定の起動信号に基づいて用 紙にインクを噴射させるヘッドと、このヘッドの 非印字時にヘッドを被覆するキャップとを有し、 乾燥等を防止するようになっている。

また、前記ヘッド1の内部やパッファタンク2の内部等に気泡等が置った場合は、前記キャップ4が被着された状態において、モータ6を駆動して吸引ポンプ7を動作させ、前記ヘッド1のノスルから気泡等を吸引することにより、インクとともにヘッド1内等の気泡を除去して跨被タンク8に排出するようになっている。

第6図は従来の他のインクジェットプリンタの 観略を示すものであり、バッファタンク2には逆 止弁5を介して吸引ポンプ7が接続されている。

この第6図の従来のインクジェットプリンタによれば、前記ヘッド1の内部等に気容等が覆った場合、吸引ポンプ7を動作させ、前記ヘッド1のノズルから気数等を吸引するとともに、パッファタンク2側からも気数等を吸引することにより、イシクとともにヘッド1内等の気数を除去して無波タンク8に排出することができる。

(発明が解決しようとする課題)

しかしながら、前述した従来の各インクジェッ

前記ヘッドに、所定ののインクが充塡されるイイなファクをパックをパップして、前記パパンクを介して、するとない、カローが変数にパップを使いたというなりに対して、カローができませる。 アを見ないのでは、カローができませる。 アを見ないのでは、カローができませる。 アを見ないのでは、カローができませる。 アを見ないのでは、カローができませる。 アを見ないのでは、カローができませる。 では、カローができませる。 日間では、カローができませる。 では、カローができませる。 日間では、カローができませる。 では、カローができませる。 では、カローができませる。

前送した構成からなる本発明によれば、 の内部やパッファタンクの内部等に気気を た場合に、ヘッドにキャップが被着されたなった。 おいて、加圧ポンプを動作させインクァクに おいて空気を送給することに おいて空気を送給することに おいて空気を送給することが内のインクを おいてないでするでは、パックで ないのが、インクを ののののののは にしてインクを のののののは にしてインクを のののののは にしてインクを ののののののは にしてインクを ののののののによった。 ののののののによった。 ののののののによった。 ののののののによった。 ののののののによった。 のののののによった。 ののののののによった。 ののののののによった。 のののののによった。 能れを円滑にさせることができる。一方、吸引ポンプを動作させてヘッドを吸引することにより、ヘッドにおける加圧されたインクおよび気泡をシクに排出させるものであり、確実に気泡を除去することができ、インクの噴射を適正に行なうことができ、印字品質の向上をはかることができる。

また、インク残量センサにより、インクタンクおよびパッファタンク関のインクがなくなったことを検出したら、加圧ポンプの駆動を停止させて加圧動作を停止させることにより、余分な空気がパファタンクに送給されてしまうことを防止することができる。

(実施例)

以下、本発明を図面に示す実施例により説明する。

第1回は本発明に係るインクジェットプリンタの実施例を示すものであり、プリンタ本体9の内部には、円筒状のプラテン10が回転駆動自在に配設されており、このプラテン10の前側には、

例を示すものであり、前記ヘッド1には、フィル タ15、15…を介してパッファタンク2が接続 されており、このパッファタンク2には、例えば、 シアン(C)、マゼンダ(M)、イエロー(Y)、 ブラック(B)の各色のインクを充塡するインク タンク3が接続されている。前記パッファタンク 2には、パッファタンク排出口16、16…の近 傍に位置する排出パルプ<u>17、17</u>…が接続され ており、前記パッファタンク2とインクタンク3 との間には、インクの有無を検出するフォトイン タラブタ等のインク残量センサ18.18…が介 殺されている。また、前記インクタンク3には、 フィルタ15およびパルプ(19)を介して中報器 20が接続されており、この中観器20には、フ ィルタ15を介して加圧接続口21が接続されて いる。前記各部材は、前記キャリッジ12に搭載 されるものである。

一方、前記プリンタ本体9例には、前記ヘッド 1を被制するとともに、前記パッファタンク排出 ロ16、加圧接続ロ21に接続されるキャップ4

2本のガイドシャフト11。11が前紀プラテン 10の軸方向に沿って配扱されている。これらの 各ガイドシャフト11には、キャリッジ12がガ イドシャフト11に沿って往復動自在に配設され ており、このキャリッジ12には、例えば、シア ン、マゼンダ、イエロー、ブラックの各色のイン クを順射するためのヘッド1が搭収されている。 また、前記キャリッジ12には、前記ヘッド1に 前記各色のインクを供給するインクタンク3が内 設されている複数のインクカートリッジ3Aが装 着されており、前記プリンタ本体9には、前記キ ャリッジ12のヘッド1へのインク旅路内の気包 等を除去するためのポンプユニット 1 3 が配設さ れている。さらに、前記プリンタ本体9のプラテ ン10の後方側には、ロール状に巻回された連続 状の用紙14が配数されており、この用紙14は、 前記プラテン10の外周に沿って所定の印字位置 に案内されるようになっている。

また、第2因は前記インクジェットプリンタに適用されるインク供給および気泡排出機構の実施

が設けられており、このキャップ4には、前記へッド1のノズル1 aに接続されるインク吸引口22と、前記パッファタンク排出口16に接続されるインク排出口23と、前記加圧接続口21に接続される加圧供給口24とがそれぞれ前記キャップ4の鉛直方向においてほぼ同一面内に形成されている。

前記キャップ4の各インク吸引口22には、各インク吸引口22からのインクを集合する中報器25が接続されており、この中報器25には、外部と連通する位置をとりうる吸引圧解除バルブ26が接続されている。さらに、前記中報器25には、逆止弁5を介してモータ6により動作される吸引ポンプ7が接続されており、この吸引ポンプ7には、他の逆止弁5を介して廃彼タンク8が接続されている。

さらに、前記キャップ4のインク排出口23の 近傍には、前記インク排出口23をバッファタン ク排出口16に接続した状態において、例えば、 前記各排出パルプ17を開閉動作させるピン(図 示せず)を駆動するためのソレノイド等の駆動業子(因示せず)が突出可能に設けられている。また、各インク排出口23には、前記廃液タンク8が接続されている。

前記キャップ4の加圧供給口24には、フィル タ15および逆止弁5を介して、モータ27によ り動作される加圧ポンプ28が接続されており、 この加圧ポンプ28には、他の逆止弁5を介して 外気が吸入されるようになっている。また、前紀 加圧ポンプ28と前記キャップ4の加圧供給口 24との間には、前記加圧ポンプ28により供給 される加圧空気の一定値以上の圧力を選がして加 圧供給口24に一定圧の空気を供給するためのり リーフパルプ29と、前記加圧ポンプ28からの 加圧空気の圧力を検出する圧力センサ30℃、外 気と連通する位置をとりうる加圧解除パルプ31 とがそれぞれ接続されており、さらに、前紀圧力 センサ30には、外気の温度による圧力の変動を 補正するために用いられる外気温センサ32が取 付けられている。

により、外気温が高い程加圧ポンプ 2 8 のモータ 2 7 の駆動電圧を下げるように制御するようにな されており、これにより、外気温に応じて選正に 加圧圧力を制御することができるようになってい る。

つぎに、前述した構成からなる本実施例の作用 について説明する。

そして、印字が終了したら、前記キャリッジ 1 2 は所定の基準位置に戻されるが、この基準位

また、前記ヘッド1の内部やバッファタンク2の内部等に気包等が置った場合は、前記ヘッド1に前記キャップ4が被着された状態において、モータ27を駆動して加圧ボンプ28を動作させるとともに、モータ6を駆動して吸引ボンプ7を動作させる。

これにより、前記キャップ4の加圧供給口24 から加圧接続口21を介してインクタンク3に加 圧空気を送給し、パッファタンク2およびヘッド 1 のインク協語内のインクを加圧する。そして、この加圧により、インク協路内の気泡が収縮され、気泡によるインク協路の開塞を防止してインクの 協れを円滑に行なうことができる。

一方、前記吸引ポンプ 7 により、インク吸引口 2 2 からヘッド 1 のノズル 1 名を吸引することに より、ヘッド 1 内の加圧されたインクおよび気泡 がノズル 1 名から吸引されて廃板タンク 8 に排出 される。

カセンサ30により加圧値を一定に制御することができ、一定以上の圧力が加わった場合でも、リリーフパルプ29により余分な圧力を逃がして、常に一定の加圧値を得ることができる。さらに、前記インク残量センサ18により、余分な空気がパッファタンク2に送給されてしまうことを確実に防止することができる。

さらにまた、パッファタンク2の排出より開閉 カイ をキャップ 4 側に設けた駆動素子により開閉 別作させるようにしているので、前記は出出のルインで、前記をを発する。また、前記の口では、では、では、このは、このないでは、では、では、ことができ、中ののでは、ことができ、中ののとはなる。

なお、本発明は前記実施例に限定されるもので はなく、必要に応じて種々変更することができる。 **.**

さらに、前記加圧ポンプ 2 8 による加圧により インクタンク 3 の充塡インクがなくなると、前記 インク残量センサ 1 8 が、インクタンク 3 からに ッファタンク 2 の途中のインクがなくなったの を検出することにより、前記加圧ポンプ 2 8 の駆動を停止させて加圧動作を停止し、インクタ 3 へのインクの補充を行なう。これにより、分 な空気がパッファタンク 2 に送給されてしまうこ とがない。

このように、本実施例によれば、加圧ポンプと8により加圧するとともに、吸引ポンプでにより、インク液路内の気を発生しているので、気色の膨脹の発生によりインクの機路を開塞してインクの機れを動けてしまうことがなく、確実に気色を除去するの情楽、ヘッド1からのインクの機能を適正に行なうことができる。

また、加圧ポンプ28により加圧する際に、圧

(発明の効果)

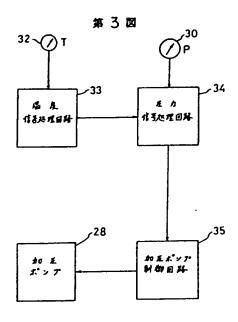
4. 図面の簡単な説明

第 1 図は本発明に係るインクジェットプリンタ の一実施例を示す斜視図、第 2 図は第 1 図のプリ

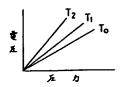
待開平4-70351 (6)

ンタに適用されるインク供給および気泡除去機構を示すプロック図、第3 図は第2 図の加圧ポンプの圧力温度補正制物回路を示すプロック図、第4 図の外気温による圧力と加圧ポンプの駆動電圧との関係を示す線図、第5 図は従来のインクジェットプリンタを示すプロック図、の他のインクジェットプリンタを示すプロック図である。

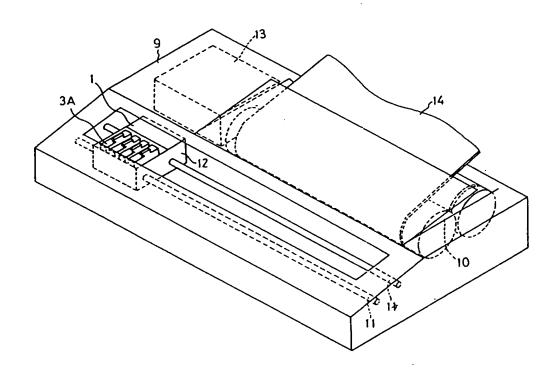
1 … ヘッド、2 … バッファタンク、3 … インクタンク、3 A … インクカートリッジ、4 … キャップ、7 … 吸引ポンプ、8 … 鹿被タンク、12 … キャリッジ、16 … バッファタンク排出口、17 … 排出パルプ、18 … インク残量センサ、21 … 加圧接続口、22 … インク吸引口、23 … インク排出口、24 … 加圧供給口、28 … 加圧ポンプ、29 … リリーフバルプ、30 … 圧力センサ、32 … 外気温センサ。



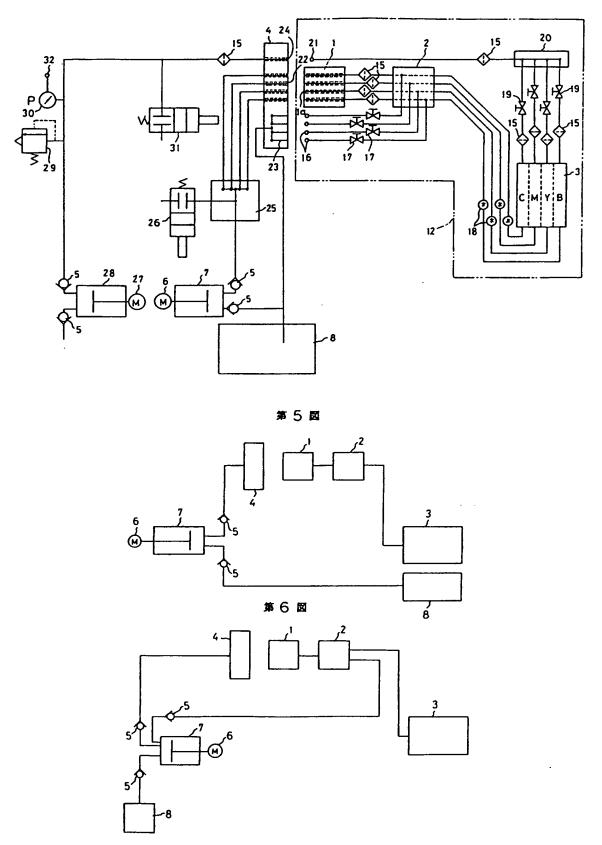
第 4 図



第 1 図



第2図



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